DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 258 RC 012 325

TITLE Options in Education. Program No. 238-241: Indian Education, Parts One-Four.
INSTITUTION George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. Inst. for Educational Leadership.: National Public Radio, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 56p.: Not available in paper copy due to small print size.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Culture: *American Indian Education: American Indians: Boarding Schools: *Cultural Differences: Educational Change: Elementary Secondary Education: Failure: *Federal Indian Relationship: Government School Relationship: *Outcomes of Education: Postsecondary Education: *Self Determination: Student Attitudes: Teacher Attitudes: Teaching Methods: Tribes: Urban American Indians
IDENTIFIERS Laguna Acoma Combined Junior Senior High Sch NM: Navajo Community College AZ

ABSTRACT

The four half-hour radio programs focused on federally provided public education for American Indians: boarding schools of the past and present and the change to Indian controlled schools: the problem of culture conflict for American Indian college students and graduates: and the special problems of urban Indians, including stereotypes, teacher insensitivity, and isolation from tribal culture. In brief interviews, Indian parents and students, teachers and counselors, administrators and school board members, and program directors and coordinators commented on such topics as course content, curriculum, drug and alcohol use among students, teacher motivation, school and program regulations, religion, myths about Indians, failure and drop out rates, cultural isolation, prejudice, and academic aspiration. The Laguna-Akama (sic) Combined Junior and Senior High School and the Laguna-Akama (sic) Elementary School, both in New Mexico, and the Navajo Community College in Arizona are featured in many interviews. (SB)

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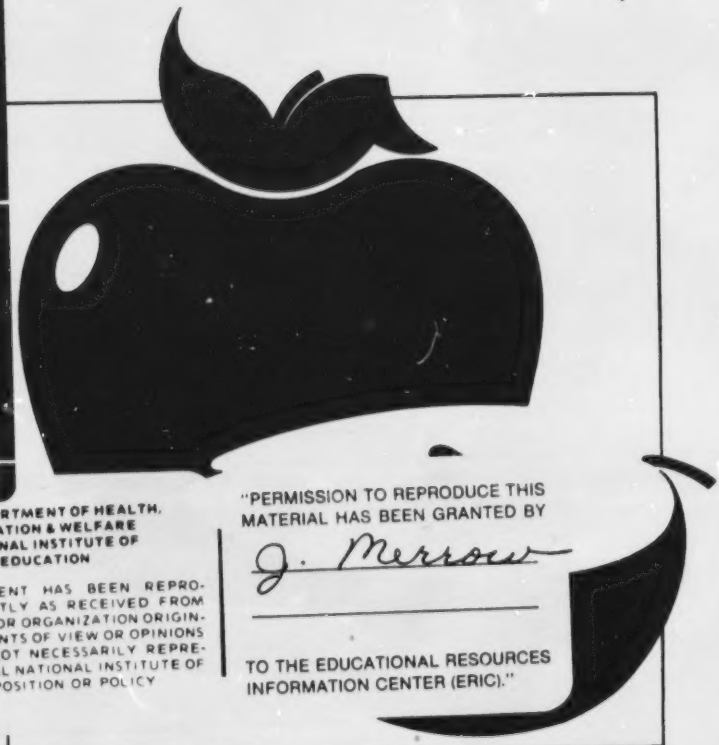

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

takes listeners to the core of the issues

RC 012325

Program No. 238: "Indian Education, Part One"

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION
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TEACHER: Okay, on page 214. It's scene four, a room in the palace. A banquet is prepared. Macduff, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords and Attendants. Okay, who will be Macbeth? I think that David will be Macbeth.

DAVID: All right.

TEACHER: And then Lords, I think Loren will be Lords. Loren Lords, I can remember that. And Lady M. will be Alma, she does a good Lady M. And a murderer. I think Florinda should be the murderer. Type casting. And -- I always give somebody Banquo's Ghost. They never --

MERROW: Why don't you be Banquo's Ghost.

TEACHER: I'll be Banquo's Ghost. They never figure out that there is no Banquo's Ghost. Okay, I think that's enough to start with. Okay --

MERROW: Before you start -- before you start, what's the relevance of a play like Macbeth to Indians?

TEACHER: I don't know how to answer that. The relevance of a play like Macbeth to Indians. Okay, the relevance of a play --

MERROW: Does anybody ask you that? Do students ask you that?

TEACHER: Heck, no, they don't ask me that.

STUDENT: Hey, what is it?

TEACHER: What is the relevance? Okay, what is relevance? Do you know what relevance is? What's relevance? What does relevance mean?

REINHARDT: Is Macbeth relevant to Indians? For that matter, what is relevant to Indians? Not easy questions to answer. Education for Indians has been a dilemma and a sore spot for nearly 200 years. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, for NPR's Options in Education, with the first in a series on Indian education.

REINHARDT: Indian education is more than a sore spot and a dilemma. It's also been, by and large, a failure. Indians have a high dropout rate, nearly double that for whites. And their school achievement records are consistently low.

MERROW: The responsibility for Indian education rests with the federal government, because of treaties signed with different tribes. Basically, the government took Indian lands and promised education,

among other things, in return.

REINHARDT: But almost from the beginning there's been disagreement about the goals of education.

MERROW: Should Indians be educated to succeed in the white world, or to remain Indian, or to bridge both cultures? Not surprisingly, Indian priorities are very often different from those of whites. Oren Lyone, an Onendaga.

LYONS: You begin in school, right in the beginning, now. This is a good area to begin in so you understand, because we watch this and we're against this, and we don't like our kids going to school for several reasons. One of them is that you teach them to be competitive at such an early age, right in the beginning. I remember, you know, they ask, "Well, Johnny, do you know the answer to this question?" And he maybe or maybe doesn't know. But the little girl or boy sitting right next to him will say, "I know." Puts her hand right in front of her face and says, "I know. I know. I know." So the teacher says, oh, well, she knows, so she answers and gets patted on the head, you know. And that little girl has just learned, or that little boy has just learned right then and there that it pays to take advantage of somebody else's weakness or misunderstanding. They've learned that lesson right off the bat at this age. Now, that goes on. So your school pays attention to who's first, second and third in the class, and the last in the class is left to fend for themselves. You know, you don't -- the way that the Indian people tell us is that the strongest walks with the slowest and the weakest. You don't let your strong people out front and walk, and leave all your people strung out back behind here, to be alone. Your strongest walks as slow as the weakest. I think it's inherent right in the school system that you have to really look at and wonder how are you going to begin another way of education. Must be a better way. There's got to be a better way.

MERROW: Oren Lyons, an Onendaga in upstate New York. That material was recorded for Options in Education by Alex van Oss.

REINHARDT: Most Indian children, about 80 percent, go to the public schools that Lyons was describing, where the system produces winners and losers, and those who don't even try.

RESERVATION KIDS ON THE WAY THEY GET HIGH

MERROW: Are you stoned right now?

STUDENT: No. No, not now.

MERROW: You're nice and relaxed.

STUDENT: No, I'm not stoned.

MERROW: How about you?

STUDENT: No, it wore off. Now I'm all burned out.

MERROW: But you smoked some dope already today?

STUDENT: Uh-huh.

MERROW: When did you smoke dope?

STUDENT: Lunch.

MERROW: Where do you smoke?

STUDENT: The bleachers. Everybody does. They drink Jack Daniels and Wild Turkey.

MERROW: I don't know who it was, but some kid was just sent home for being drunk. Does that happen often?

STUDENT: Yeah.

REINHARDT: Those two 13 year olds go to a public school in Laguna, New Mexico. They're members of the Laguna Tribe, entitled to an education by virtue of their treaty. No guarantees, unfortunately, of the quality of their schooling.

RESERVATION CLASS WITH RADIO BLARING

MERROW: The teacher lets you have this class with this thing on?

STUDENT: Yeah.

MERROW: No complaints? Doesn't tell you to turn it off?

STUDENT: No.

MERROW: How can you get any work done with that thing on?

STUDENT: Easy. I'm used to it.

REINHARDT: There are 300 to 400,000 school aged Indians, depending on whose estimate you believe.

MERROW: The most recent official count was the 1970 census. Even though two federal agencies are spending nearly $350 million this year specifically for Indian schooling, neither agency has an accurate head count.

REINHARDT: About 80 percent of Indian children go to public school, either on or off the reservation.

MERROW: The other 20 percent may go to a federally run school, which may be a boarding school, or to an Indian controlled school.

REINHARDT: No matter what kind of school they go to, for reasons having to do with incompetence, lack of money, and by now tradition, Indian students sit through a lot of boring classes.

A SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS

TEACHER: Leo just got the last one. The President removes two Senators for accepting bribes. How did you answer that problem? How are Senators removed from office? By the Senate? Check those again. Why doesn't somebody read through that lesson and see if you can find the answer before the end of the period.

REINHARDT: We're going to spend most of this half hour in a public school, the Laguna-Akama Combined Junior and Senior High School, on the Laguna Reservation near Albuquerque, New Mexico.

MERROW: The school has 620 students, grades 7 through 12. 530 or 85 percent are either Laguna or Akama Indians.

REINHARDT: Only five of the school's 32 teachers are Indian. Four aides, two counsellors and one administrator are also Indian. The Principal is Spanish-American.

MERROW: The curriculum is pretty much what you'd find anywhere, although some of the teachers say they try to add an Indian or a Laguna-Akama perspective.

AN ASTRONOMY CLASS

TEACHER: I try to bring that out in homework assignments by having students ask parents, grandparents, name Indian names, say, for constellations, for pictures of stars in the sky, which is essentially what a constellation is. Because they see different pictures than what the Greeks saw, which is what our constellations are based on, are the old Greek and Persian constellations. And the students will come to me, write it down in their assignment paper, names of various constellations.

MERROW: Now, is there a special name, say, for Cassiopeia?

TEACHER: I don't know. I'm sure there is. The -- let's see -- oh, Cassiopeia --

MERROW: Well, any one of them.

TEACHER: I'm trying to think of the -- Cassiopeia -- I'm trying to think -- oh, the Pleiades is one example I know, the Pleiades. They call that the Seven Bears, and some Indian tribes call it the Seven Sisters. And how they got there I don't know. Now, the Indian myths

vary from locations around the nation, and from one pueblo to another, and there are slight variations. They have stories about how fire got from the sun down to earth.

MERROW: Do you bring things like that into your curriculum?

TEACHER: Yes. And if I had transportation I could take them to the planetarium in Albuquerque, where they have a complete program of this, based upon Indian mythology. And I have the written material to reproduce it here, but it requires slides and pictures, which I don't have, because that's all copyrighted and everything with their program at the planetarium. But I mention these stories to them.

MERROW: Dwayne Dill. He teaches astronomy and other science courses at Laguna-Akama Junior and Senior High School.

REINHARDT: Not all courses have a direct and obvious connection to Indian culture or history. Most teachers and administrators say there's no reason they should, because school is preparing the students to live in the white world.

STUDENTS READING FROM MACBETH

TEACHER: Okay, on page 214. It's scene four, room in the palace. A banquet is prepared. Macduff, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords and Attendants. Okay --

MERROW: Before you start -- before you start, what's the relevance of a play like Macbeth to Indians?

TEACHER: I don't know how to answer that. The relevance of a play like Macbeth to Indians. Okay, the relevance of a play --

MERROW: Does anybody ask you that? Do the students ask you that?

TEACHER: Heck, no, they don't ask me that.

STUDENT: What is it?

TEACHER: What is the relevance? Okay, what is relevance? Do you know what relevance is? What's relevance? What does relevance mean? If I say something is relevant to you, what do I mean? Is school relevant to you? It's important to you. You learn something from it. Okay, what about Macbeth? Is Macbeth relevant to you?

STUDENT: Just when you go to college.

TEACHER: Yeah. Well, okay. But that's a pretty poor motivation, I mean reading Macbeth so you can go to college and impress your friends. I think it's relevant, because of this. It's a tragedy. Tragedies are

like extremely depressing, extremely bad things happening, and hey, I think that stuff happens around here a lot. Because -- I mean ever since I've moved out here I've seen a lot of tragedy. And I think there's a lot out here. So that's all I want to say, okay? Can we --

MERROW: No, wait a minute. I want to ask you one more question, though. Do you try to relate what happens in Shakespeare's play to things that have happened here? Do you try to get people to talk about that?

TEACHER: I don't know. I've been afraid to. Maybe I should, huh?

MERROW: Huh?

TEACHER: Maybe I will one day, I don't know.

MERROW: Why do you have them read Macbeth?

TEACHER: Why do I have them read Macbeth? Because the department head said so. No, because I think it's a really good play.

MERROW: Should the curriculum for Indian, Laguna-Akama students be different?

TEACHER: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, I think so.

MERROW: But it should include Macbeth?

TEACHER: Well, okay, see, this is it. I think that the curriculum here has not been good and it's not organized in any way and we just pretty much make up what we want, but we're trying to get real organized and what we're trying to do is we're trying to have like every -- I mean this is just one little thing, but it's big for around here -- is to have 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th all read Shakespeare at the same time. I mean that's never been done before, that I know of.

MERROW: How long have you taught here?

TEACHER: I've taught here a year.

MERROW: Why are you teaching out here?

TEACHER: Why am I teaching out here?

MERROW: In the middle of nowhere.

STUDENT: They wouldn't hire her anyplace else.

TEACHER: Really. That's -- okay, a lot of teachers end up here because you can't get in anywhere else. But also I really like this

place because I think it's real pretty, and these kids, hey, they are the best. For one thing, I never get any smart talk, I never get any junk from them. I mean there are no discipline problems whatsoever. They are the best. And then, basically really smart people. I mean these people know what they're doing.

MERROW: Do you fall into that category of idealistic, young whites who come out to teach Indians?

TEACHER: And want to save the savages, you mean? No, I was not here for that reason. I was here because I was starving and I needed the job, so I took it. That's all. But I have known people like that and they get burnt out really easily when they come here.

MERROW: But you've only been here a year. You might get burnt out.

TEACHER: Well, hey, well, so? I might get burnt out but I'm not out here to save anybody's soul. I mean I'm just out here teaching because I like to teach, that's why.

MERROW: What's your name?

TEACHER: My name is Marcie McKennie. Can we please just read the play now? Okay, let's begin.

STUDENT: "You know your own degrees. Sit down, at first and last a hearty welcome."

STUDENT: "Thank you, Your Majesty."

STUDENT: "Ourself will mingle with society and play the humble host."

REINHARDT: This year grades 9 through 12 are reading Shakespeare.

MERROW: Lots of Elizabethan English, but no Karisan, the language of the Laguna and the Akama.

REINHARDT: The school had a course in Karisan, but it lasted only two years.

MERROW: The principal says the course died because students weren't interested. The teacher, Gail Cerno, says the decision to drop the course was made by educators and other adults, not by students.

REINHARDT: Cerno, a graduate of the school, taught the language course. She's now a counsellor aide and sees herself as a role model for the Indian students.

MERROW: She'd like the language course put back.

TEACHER GAIL CERNO

CERNO: I saw the good it was doing. You know, it wasn't -- there wasn't a big change, you know. The kids weren't learning overnight, but they were picking up. They weren't as scared as they were at the beginning of the year, you know, to speak their own language. And it takes a long time. I mean I didn't learn my language overnight. It took me up to now. I'm 26 years old, and it took me 26 years and I'm still learning.

MERROW: Why do you think it's important for Indian students from pueblos to study their own language? Don't they learn that at home?

CERNO: Some -- not anymore. See, most of the time, like our parents, when they were going to school, they were told to speak English or they would get slapped, you know. You can't speak your own language at school. So now they don't want their kids growing up not knowing -- you know, speaking their own language in school, because of what might have happened to them. So they tend to talk to them in English. And like with me, my Dad couldn't speak any English, so we used to have to teach him. He wanted to learn in order to work, you know, in the outside world. So we would teach him. And all of a sudden it got into we were all speaking English. I think it's turning back now the other way, because our children, including mine, can't speak very good Indian anymore. They're losing their language. And after I started working there, I speak to mine in Indian, my kids, and they don't speak it. They understand it. Once in awhile you'll hear them. At least it's a beginning.

MERROW: So maybe it will come back. I mean is that your hope?

CERNO: I hope so, because I think where it really needs to be started is in the elementary schools, because it's easy to teach a child, but when they get to high school, it gets harder, because they've lost out so many years already.

REINHARDT: Gail Cerno, a counsellor aide at Laguna-Akama Junior and Senior High School, in Laguna, New Mexico.

MERROW: Many Indian people feel strongly about their languages, about the necessity of teaching their children, and about the unbreakable connection between language and culture. Lance Lujan, a Cayawa.

LANCE LUJAN OF THE INSTITUTE FOR INDIAN LAW

LUJAN: Well, I think it gives you an ability to convey a different thought process and express it in a different way, other than English. I think that that gives you a little more, say, intellectual flexibility, because you can -- you know, what they say about losing

something in the translation is really, really true, really, really true. And that experience has been driven home to me, and maybe this is why I'm concerned about this. I spent a week in Quebec, French speaking Canada, and in trying to communicate with people and trying to translate back and forth I really found that you do lose a lot in the translation and that the expressions that were translated were, you know, really far more eloquent than -- in certain situations, than English. So, you know, that's the intellectual flexibility that I'm talking about. And it may be that there are some Indian languages where -- well, I've heard some, that were absolutely almost musical, you know. They flow and the way they express themselves, are just eloquent.

REINHARDT: It almost sounds to me as if you're saying that the language is the key to the culture and you could even leave out discussion of a lot of other things, as long as the language is --

LUJAN: Well, I don't think you can exclude all the other stuff. If you can do the language then all the stuff has got to come in. All that -- whatever we decide upon, about the definition of culture, whatever that is.

MERROW: Lance Lujan, a Cayawa. He works for the Institute for the Development of Indian Law, in Washington, D. C.

REINHARDT: At Laguna-Akawa Junior-Senior High School, not only is there no course in Karisan, there's only a short social studies unit on Indians in the southwest, like this one.

INEXPERIENCED SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

MERROW: What are you doing right now?

TEACHER: We're working on -- this is a southwest native cultures class, and we're working with Indian culture classes and stuff. It's really quite foreign to some people. Like for me, I'm originally from the midwest, and studying about the Apache, Navajo, Hopi is totally foreign to me, but I'm learning quickly.

MERROW: But you're teaching it.

TEACHER: They're teaching me more than I'm teaching them, I think.

MERROW: Some of the questions on the board, is that part of a test?

TEACHER: Well, we don't have a book for the class, for the most part, so what we do, I find them readings and then put the questions on the board.

MERROW: What kind of answer do you expect to question number seven,

"Why do so many Indians remain in poverty?"

TEACHER: It's a personal question, I guess. You know, it looks -- they stay in poverty, you know, because it's familiar to them. So it's not -- you know, a lot of people won't run off and leave Albuquerque and stuff, because it's just --

MERROW: What sort of answer do you expect these students to give you?

TEACHER: I'm just curious myself to see what they say. This is my first year here, so I'm just curious as to what they say.

BRIAN VALENCIA, AN INDIAN STUDENT

VALENCIA: Why do so many Indians remain in poverty? Because they want to, I guess. I don't know. Maybe they're a lot better off there. They think they're better off there, and they -- I don't know, they feel much more comfortable in poverty and whatever.

MERROW: Do you have any quarrel with the question itself? Is it true?

VALENCIA: In a way, I guess. I don't know.

MERROW: How about yourself? Tell me about what you would like to be doing five years from now.

VALENCIA: I guess be going to college, or finishing college in five years, and making my own living, or whatever.

MERROW: Doing what, any idea?

VALENCIA: I want to either get into electronics or architecture work, maybe come back out here to try and help around out here, get things going, see what I can do out here.

MERROW: Many Indians do very poorly in school. Why is that?

VALENCIA: I don't know. Maybe -- I'm not sure. Well, some just -- you know, they just talk about what they do around here. Mostly that's what it is. They just talk about, like, you know, in the evenings -- like because most of us go hunting in the evenings, you know, and stuff like that, and you know, when you come back to school they're all talking about, you know, what they all did and what they saw, and maybe it's because of that.

MERROW: You said that many of your friends who've gone off to college come back after a semester. Do you expect that to happen to you?

VALENCIA: No, uh-uh. I have my mind set on going all the way, you

know, and when I have my mind set to do something, you know, I'll do it. And I want to make my parents real happy, because I know that's what they want.

MERROW: But a lot of your friends, the same age, 16, around there, are already drinking a fair amount, already having problems with alcohol.

VALENCIA: Yeah. Some are even younger. Some -- when they reach about maybe 13 or 14, that's when they start, and you know -- you know, in a way I don't like it because it makes me feel bad. It makes me feel like, you know, we're letting down our tradition, you know, and taking what's not -- what wasn't given to us. So, I don't know, there's a lot of things I feel, but -- the main reason why they drink is like when their parents get mad at them, you know, they'll run out and go get a drink or something, they'll start getting drunk. Or like if their girl friends get mad at them or something. And I just tell them it ain't going to help, you know. Drinking's not going to solve your problem. You've got to talk it out, work it out in some way. So -- and most of them tried it that way, you know, and they said it works. They, you know, get along with it now, the ones that have stopped.

MERROW: The suicide rate among Indians is a lot higher than it is among whites, among any other group. Is that also true among Laguna?

VALENCIA: Laguna, the main village around here would be Powati, but they're within the Laguna Tribe, and up there in Laguna, I mean Powati, it's pretty high. So -- it's mainly because of family fights or getting in, you know, arguments with their girl friends and whatnot.

MERROW: Why would a young Indian go out and kill himself or herself over a girl friend or --

VALENCIA: I don't know. That's one thing I can't understand. You know, there's a lot of other nice looking girls around. I'm just -- you know, I want to live my full life and I want to see the rest of the world, you know, before I even settle down or something.

MERROW: Have you had friends, kids you've known, who are dead now?

VALENCIA: Yeah, I have quite a few. I have a cousin who shot himself lately, and he did it because of his girl friend. And another friend before that. He was one of the top runners here, and he did it because of his stepfather or something, treating him wrong or something.

MERROW: How old were they?

VALENCIA: He was about 17 and my cousin was about the same age, 17. They were both about that old when they shot themselves.

MERROW: Why so many more Indians, proportionally, than whites or

blacks?

VALENCIA: I don't know.

MERROW: Indians don't give up like that, do they?

VALENCIA: No, mostly Indians don't, but I don't know why. Maybe -- I don't know. I wish I knew. But I tried to, you know, I thought about it a couple of times, you know, why do they do this. There's a whole lot of future ahead of them, and I don't know why. I can't seem to find the answer about that.

REINHARDT: Brian Valencia, a junior at Laguna-Akama Junior and Senior High School.

MERROW: A persistent problem for Indian students everywhere, whether in public schools like Laguna-Akama, in federally run schools, or even Indian controlled schools, is the difficulty of succeeding in two cultures, the white and that of a particular tribe.

REINHARDT: Richard Chino is in charge of discipline at the school. A college educated Laguna, he's conscious of being a role model, but he worries that his role is not much incentive. Why go to college if you're going to end up as school disciplinarian.

RICHARD CHINO, SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AIDE

CHINO: The white man expects so much out of you, where education is supposed to be provided, but you can have all the education in the world and not be able to, you know, say -- and put your foot down and say, "Well, I'm Indian, you know. You can't do this to me. You can't force me." But then that's the way it is in any job that I've had, that I've felt the rewards are great because you know that you can do something beyond your own expectations. You can come up to your family or whoever, you know, or your friend, and say, "I got a job, you know. It's a steady job. It's a good paying job." I'm doing this, I'm doing that, and it's a great feeling to have, that you know that you can and you should be able to compete, you know, as being Indian. But then again, there's always that drawback, that but what if my own people see me, how are they going to see me, what are their eyes going to see me as, as being a white man or being an Indian.

REINHARDT: Richard Chino, the discipline aide at Laguna-Akama Junior and Senior High School, on the Laguna Reservation in New Mexico.

MERROW: That's a public school, run by a school board that's almost all white. The school board's headquarters are in a city 45 miles away, off the reservation.

REINHARDT: Some Laguna and Akama Indians want to gain control of the school and change it. They feel that white education is inadequate

and inappropriate.

MERROW: Next, a look at some of the other ways Indians go to school, including schools that are under Indian control.

REINHARDT: The complete transcript of all four parts of this series is available for $4.00.

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MERROW: Options in Education is a co-production of National Public Radio and the Institute for Educational Leadership of the George Washington University. Support for the series is provided by the National Institute of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REINHARDT: Options in Education is written and produced by John Merrow. Mary Rouse is our Associate Producer and Rebecca Goldfield is our Assistant Producer. Our engineers are Eileen Griffin, Norb Gallery and Terry Knight. Some of the material for this program came from Alex van Oss. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

Program No. 239: "Indian Education, Part Two"

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TEACHER: Everybody singing now.

(Children singing)

REINHARDT: Third graders, trying to learn an Indian song in an elementary school run by Indians. Their teacher is a member of their tribe, the Laguna.

MERROW: Indian control is the newest government approach to solving a problem it's had for nearly 200 years. What's the best way to educate Indians. I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt, for NPR's Options in Education, with the second in our series on schooling for American Indians. In this half hour, schools run by either the federal government or by Indians.

MERROW: Indian education's a federal responsibility because of the treaties between the government and various tribes, but past education programs haven't satisfied anybody.

REINHARDT: Today, about 80 percent of the 3 to 400,000 school aged Indians go to public school, but 50 years ago the emphasis was on boarding schools run by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

SUZAN HARJO DESCRIBES BOARDING SCHOOLS OF THE PAST

HARJO: My father is one of those people who spoke nothing but Creek until he was 11 years old, and had that beaten out of him in boarding school.

MERROW: Suzan Harjo is part Cheyenne, part Creek.

HARJO: And as a consequence did not have any of his children go to boarding school. My mother was not subject to physical abuse, but was not allowed to take any academic courses, and took only sewing, secretarial kinds of courses, and when she asked to take academic courses at one of our finer government institutions, was told that she would never rise beyond a secretary, anyway. There, in government boarding schools for many years, was the shop and hair-dressing approach to Indian education.

REINHARDT: Even the boys didn't take academic courses.

HARJO: Right. Learned many things that you might pick up in prison. You could learn to make a license plate anyplace. The overall problem, though, is not so much what courses kids were forced to take or not forced to take. It was the separation of Indian children from

all those people who reinforce Indian children, aunts, uncles, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and the lack of appreciation of the extended family in Indian life. The purpose of Indian boarding schools, of course, were to send Indian people sailing down the mainstream, and oftentimes what came out at the other end were brown white people. Indians didn't stop being Indians. They didn't stop looking Indian, but the things that distinguish Indians from other people, Indian language, Indian dances, Indian religion, Indian philosophy, if you will, were often kept from the young Indian people. It might not be so disagreeable if those boarding schools had turned out topnotch scientists. This did not happen.

MERROW: Suzan Harjo, who is Cheyenne and Creek. She works for the Native American Rights Fund in Washington, D. C.

REINHARDT: The logic behind boarding schools was simple. It's easier to educate Indians in one place, instead of building and finding teachers for scattered schools in remote areas.

MERROW: It's also easier to assimilate children when they're away from their parents. Arnold Cassadoor, an Apache who went to boarding school for nine years in the 1960s.

ARNOLD CASSADOOR SAYS THE SCHOOLS WERE USED AS VEHICLES OF ASSIMILATION

CASSADOOR: We were punished for speaking our language for, I don't know, so long. Just like we were punished for not going to a church of our choice, and this didn't include Indian churches, include, you know, other churches that exist today. So we were punished for not attending church or speaking our own language.

ABBOT: Who punished you?

CASSADOOR: BIA officials, dormitory attendants that were under BIA, you know, they run the dormitories.

ABBOT: How did that affect you when you were a child?

CASSADOOR: Well, at that age you don't have a worldly view of what's right, you know, what's human rights or what's your right as a student. So, unaware of that, I guess we just took it, and I really didn't think much of it, except to go through the routine. I used to remember the times when they stuck me back in on Sunday afternoon, and I would cry, you know, and my parents would bring me on a wagon and I would cry after them, and the attendants would, you know, fight with me and finally take me back into the dorm.

ABBOT: How old were you then?

CASSADOOR: I must have been about 6 or 7.

REINHARDT: Arnold Cassadoor, an Apache who spent nine years in an Indian boarding school. He was interviewed for Options in Education by Bill Abbot, member station KUNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

MERROW: Today, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the BIA, operates 67 boarding schools with about 22,000 Indian students.

STUDENT: Seems like you get more -- you get quite a bit of freedom out here. The only thing, you're just living on your own, you have your own room, just like keeping it clean and get money, you could work and get some money. It's just like living on your own and taking a big responsibility coming up here.

REINHARDT: That student goes to Chilocco Indian School, a boarding school in Oklahoma, near the Kansas state line. The Bureau of Indian Affairs says it's de-emphasizing boarding schools. It has fewer of them today and they're only for special students.

MERROW: D. Gregory, the principal at Chilocco.

PRINCIPAL OF A BOARDING SCHOOL IN CHILOCCO, OKLAHOMA

GREGORY: The social criteria for admittance to any Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school is based upon the student need, whether it be socio-economic, or it could be failure to adjust in the community, or it might be a case of a youngster being sent to a reformatory or to a Bureau school. We accept those kind of students.

STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL

STUDENT: The first semester I got up here I was kind of crazy, but I kind of took a look at myself and had to grow up, because it's a big world now, and wake up.

FOSTER: Was it the people here at Chilocco, the things they taught you?

STUDENT: Well, mostly just a lot of talking to and counselling and help with my mother and things. Then finally one day it just went in my head that I had to straighten up. So now I'm pretty well walking a straight line now.

STUDENT: You know, Indians, they're kind of shy. They won't get up and talk. But, you know, -- well, white kids, you know, they're not that shy. Because about half the class is white and there's only a couple of Indians in there. You know, Indians won't get up and talk. They'll just sit there and wait for it.

FOSTER: And the teachers never made any kind of an effort to try to help the Indians or to try to open them up?

STUDENT: No, not when I was in public school they didn't.

STUDENT: It seems like public school teachers just come there to get paid. They tell you one thing and just sit up behind a desk with their nose behind a book. But up here they're -- they take at least 30 minutes to try to explain things to you or something.

REINHARDT: Students at Chilocco Indian School, a BIA run boarding school on the Oklahoma-Kansas state line. They were interviewed for Options in Education by Lewis Foster, member station KMUW, Wichita, Kansas.

MERROW: 12 years ago Chilocco had 1,200 students. Today it has 180, and it's closing for good in June. The reasons given? Its reputation for student violence and its high per pupil cost, $19,000.00 a year.

REINHARDT: Today, most Indians go to public school. It's widely believed that public schools, emphasizing competition, aren't working for Indians, who have the highest dropout rate of any group.

MERROW: Among the public school failures is Bruce Geary, a member of the Chippewa Tribe.

BRUCE GEARY, A CHIPPEWA WHO DROPPED OUT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL

GEARY: I had an English class. It was for reading, and all I had to do was go in there and read a paperback and the teacher was satisfied. You know, you can't learn much off a western.

ALBERT: You told me before that you had gone to some other schools as well. Now, is the problem you're talking about here the same kind of a problem you'd find at other schools, or is that something that you found only here?

GEARY: Well, the first school I went to was a parochial school, you know, and it was strict, and a lot of discipline and stuff, and you know, you learned what the teachers were trying to teach you. And over here, you can go over there, you can look out the window all day long. You don't have to listen to the teacher. And I could just draw pictures on my paper, you know, and the hour was up and the teacher would go on to the next subject.

REINHARDT: Bruce Geary, a highschool dropout who has since gotten his high school equivalency diploma. He was interviewed for Options in Education by Lynette Albert, Station KEYA, Belcort, North Dakota.

MERROW: The school that Geary dropped out of is now Indian controlled.

REINHARDT: Indian control of schools is being touted as the latest

approach to improving Indian education. It's not a new idea. Some tribes had their own schools in the 19th century. In 1852 the Cherokees had 21 schools, with 1,100 students. Today about 50 schools are Indian controlled.

MERROW: Now, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is beginning to turn over its schools to local Indians.

REINHARDT: One BIA school, Laguna Elementary, now has an all Laguna School Board, a faculty that is one-third Indian and 481 students, nearly all members of the Laguna Tribe.

A NATIVE MUSIC CLASS IN AN INDIAN CONTROLLED SCHOOL

MERROW: These are the third graders, now.

TEACHER: Yes, uh-huh.

MERROW: Do you have children coming in all day?

TEACHER: I have second and third graders, a mixture.

MERROW: What do you try to teach in music class?

TEACHER: Well, mainly learning how to sing in tune, learning Indian songs. That's my big bag, because I think that there's so many good songs for the children to learn, and it's their kind of thing. We learn other songs too, of course, you know.

MERROW: But you think it's important that these children learn not just Laguna songs, but --

TEACHER: No.

MERROW: -- all kinds.

TEACHER: All kinds. In fact they're all different kind of songs. Winnebago, oh, different Akama songs, Laguna songs, Navajo songs. They're learning all kinds. Of course they're all in books, you know. They're not songs that have been composed by any special person. It's just --

MERROW: It's important for you also. You really believe in doing that.

TEACHER: Yes, I believe in that, because there's so many other things that the children can learn in music, but to me, because I am Indian, it just seems to be a special thing, that I want them to sing these songs.

MERROW: How do they respond to learning songs about --

TEACHER: They like it very much. They like it, especially using the drum, the bells and the rattles. It relates to them. I think they stay -- they're interested in it. Everybody singing now.

(Children singing)

REINHARDT: A class in native music in an Indian controlled elementary school. The teacher is Margaret Coreo.

MERROW: There's an irony we can't let pass. That's the only Indian oriented class in the school. There's no course in Karisin, the language of the Language of the Laguna tribe, and Coreo herself doesn't know Karisin. She didn't learn it as a child.

THE CLASS TEACHER DOESN'T KNOW HER TRIBE'S LANGUAGE

COREO: We were told that we shouldn't learn our language, that English was what was spoken and that we should know the English language.

MERROW: There was a time in your life, then, when you were proud that you did not speak Karisin.

COREO: That's right. Now I'm sorry.

MERROW: Do you speak any at all?

COREO: A little. I can understand the language, but very few words, because there's so many words that you can say wrong, you know. They just put an accent in a different place and you've said something you shouldn't have said, maybe.

MERROW: Does it bother you that the children in this elementary school are not studying Karisin here at school?

COREO: Yes, it bothers me very much, because these children should know their language, and I don't think even some of them know their traditions, the things that they should be knowing at their age level, because after all, they're going to be the ones to carry on the traditions of the tribe, when we older people are gone. What is it going to be if they don't know?

REINHARDT: Margaret Coreo, the music teacher at Laguna Elementary School.

MERROW: The school is in its first year of Indian control, but that control is limited. The BIA gives the school money, but not the power to fire teachers. They are federal employees, protected by civil service regulations.

REINHARDT: Most of the courses at the school are pretty much what

you'd find in any other elementary school, like this math class, taught by a non-Indian.

A NON-INDIAN TEACHER IN AN INDIAN CONTROLLED SCHOOL

TEACHER: We'll start on multiplication. One digit by three digit numbers. Joseph, are you about ready to go?

JOSEPH: Yes.

TEACHER: Did anybody get them all right? Oh, well. One, two, three, four. Are you sure of that? I'm going to check your paper today.

MERROW: Does it take anything special to teach Indian children?

TEACHER: The only -- well, the big thing I would say is you just have to have a love of children to teach with Indian children. You have to have a love of kids to work with any group of children. Something special? Not really. I don't think so.

MERROW: I mean there's something called Indian education. Does that mean anything when you're teaching fourth grade math. Would you teach fourth grade math the same to my kids as you would to these kids?

TEACHER: Basically I teach it about the same way that I would to -- in a public school, I think. We use the same type of textbooks, the same textbooks. So it's maybe that we go a little slower.

MERROW: You do think you go slower? Indian kids start out a little behind?

TEACHER: Yes, sir. I'm sure -- I know we go a little slower, because a lot of the concepts and things, it's kind of basically foreign to their thinking. The abstract ideas are harder to get across than the solid things that they can see and handle.

MERROW: How long have you been teaching here?

TEACHER: 16 -- 15 years. I've been here since the school opened.

MERROW: Do you worry, as a BIA employee and as a non-Indian, about your own status, now that the school is controlled by a local school board?

TEACHER: Yes, sir, to a degree, because I am in a dead end position, and I would like to progress on up the ladder. But I'm frozen into my position, and Indian preference says that I can't promote. But as far as do I worry about working for them? Not particularly. I just don't.

MERROW: But as a non-Indian you're not going to become an

administrator, or you're not going to move up this ladder.

TEACHER: That's correct. That's correct.

MERROW: But you don't fear for your job?

TEACHER: As a teacher, I sure don't. William Thorpe, are you ready to go? Let's get up here and we'll get -- Lynn, why don't you and Joseph come up here to the board, and I'll let you guys do my writing for me today. Rudy?

REINHARDT: The local, all-Laguna school board was appointed by the tribal council. Larry Garcia, one of the board members, wants to hire more Indian teachers.

A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER SAYS MORE INDIAN TEACHERS SHOULD BE HIRED

GARCIA: We think it's important. We think that the Indian teachers, in some cases, will do a better job than a non-Indian, because they are able to understand the culture. They're able to understand what the child may be going through. I don't know exactly how to express it. I don't want to say that we are so different from, you know, the non-Indian population, but yet we are a unique people.

MERROW: Will these kids be able, will it be easy for them to go out into a non-Indian world, to a dominant white culture and get along?

GARCIA: It may be a little difficult to start, you know, from the beginning, but we have a lot of children in our cities, you know, they're elementary age and other, and they're there and they're making out. I think that there is enough mixture with non-Indians. These children are always, you know, competing in different schools, and even outside of school activities, you know, like runners. They're out there competing will all kinds of people, children. In my own family, I've tried to associate my children with whoever we can.

REINHARDT: Larry Garcia, member of the school board for the Laguna Elementary School. He hopes that Laguna students will be winners in both worlds, white and Indian. He says he wants quality education with no particular emphasis on Indian culture.

MERROW: Quality for Suzan Harjo means more Indian courses. She described what a course in Cheyenne history might be like.

SUZAN HARJO

HARJO: You would begin with prophesies and reasons for movement. You would begin with the reason why the Cheyenne people left the northeast part of this country before there was this country, and went into the

west and into the midwest, because there was the coming destruction of the white horde. You would begin with --

REINHARDT: This was before the whites came over, prophesied?

HARJO: The Cheyenne people were living around the Ojibway people in what is now Michigan by the time Columbus landed, and went into the Lacotta country once it was clear that there was much destruction taking place on the eastern seaboard. And there would be an understanding of what that history meant for the people and the kinds of laws that evolved as a result of that trail.

REINHARDT: Indian tribes do fight among each other, or do have hostilities or conflicts.

HARJO: Anywhere where there is competition over resources or territory or encroachment on territory, there will be combat, unfortunately And in this way Indian tribes have been in competition in the same ways that peoples all over the earth have been in competition, and in ways that have never produced anything very good. White people don't have the corner on bad people, and Indian people don't have the corner on good people.

REINHARDT: Would that be discussed in a civics class that's dealing with Cheyenne government?

HARJO: Certainly it would. Although the Cheyennes lived peacefully amongst every people they encountered, until the non-Indians, and the alliance that was made with the Sioux and the Arrapajo and other Indian peoples, made as an alliance to stop the destruction of the Indian people by the white people, and that culminated in the Battle of Little Big Horn, which is another fact of history, although seen by Indians as a victory and by non-Indians as a massacre.

MERROW: Suzan Harjo, of the Native American Rights Fund in Washington, D. C.

REINHARDT: Indian courses have more than just a different perspective on events like the Battle of Little Big Horn. Elders of the tribe are brought into the classroom. Oren Lyons, an Onendaga.

OREN LYONS TELLS AN INDIAN PARABLE

LYONS: It simply was that this Indian man, going along this beautiful river, hunting, you know, he was looking for muskrats and so forth, going along the edge of the river, he found a snake, and he saw it because of the sunlight sparkling on it, silver, you know. It was extraordinary. And he picked it up, because it was very small, and right next to it he saw another one. This one was gold. Extraordinary.

Beautiful. You know, took them home. Took them back, showed everybody, you know. Everybody come to look at it. "Well, what do they eat?" "I don't know. We'll find out." You know, so they began to feed it this and that and it seemed to eat just about everything. And so it became kind of a wonder for everybody to look at these two snakes, and they continued to grow, they continued to feed them, you know. Then they were astonished at how fast they grew. Not only that, but their appetite. You know, their appetite was tremendous. And the first thing you know, they were eating the fields, you know, and everybody was just running around feeding them. But they didn't want to let them go because they were beautiful, you see. And they were the only ones around, and everybody had come to look at them. So it took a great deal of effort to keep them fed, but nevertheless, it brought great fame to their particular part of the country, and so they fed them, and they fed them and they fed them, until finally there was nothing more to feed, and they said, "Well, maybe we ought to turn them loose or something. I don't think we can keep them anymore." But they didn't want to go. They thought it was pretty good right there. And so what did they begin to eat? They began to eat the village. And when they ate that village, they moved down to the next village. And from what I hear, they're still coming, coming to your village.

REINHARDT: Oren Lyons, an Onandaga from upstate New York. He tells his native myths and stories in local schools. He told that one to reporter Alex van Oss.

MERROW: Those who were expecting Indian control to change things radically are forgetting that Indians have lived for years under a federal policy of aculturation into white society. For example, the Laguna community has not insisted on a native language course in their elementary school.

REINHARDT: But it has said yes to religious instruction, in four Christian religions, in school, during school hours.

MERROW: That's illegal in an ordinary school, and it's illegal on a federal facility, which the school still is, as a BIA property.

REINHARDT: But the tribe says local control means just that. It wants religious instruction.

A NUN WHO TEACHES RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION ON A RESERVATION

SISTER: We just talked about Lent, and they're going to -- we're going to figure out one thing that we can do for -- during Lent, and they're going to, you know, mark it on this.

MERROW: I understand, Sister, that Laguna believe that after death everyone basically goes to the same place, that there is an

afterlife but that there is no distinction. But you believe, Roman Catholics believe, in a heaven and a purgatory and a hell. That would seem like a conflict.

SISTER: Yeah. I see. Well, these children have all been brought up Catholic. They're all baptized and their families are Catholic, so therefore they have -- now, they're combining the both, you know, the idea of the Indian and the other. But --

MERROW: If there's a conflict --

SISTER: I -- well, I don't know if there's a conflict there. I don't think so.

MERROW: How do you bring in the Indian religion?

SISTER: Oh, it's brought in incidentally in some of it, but if it comes up, you know, we bring it in that way.

MERROW: Do you know a good deal about it?

SISTER: I -- well, I've only been here a year and a half, so I'm not -- I know quite a bit about it, but I still could use, you know, a lot more knowledge.

MERROW: Well, carry on.

SISTER: All right. Will those two boys who gave out papers please give them this one, too.

REINHARDT: Indian control at the local level may improve Indian education, but it will take time.

MERROW: There's another question. How much do non-Indian children know about Indians?

SUZAN HARJO ON MYTHS WHITES BELIEVE ABOUT INDIANS

HARJO: Very little. They know there are no more Mohicans, which is not accurate.

MERROW: Suzan Harjo, with the Native American Rights Fund in Washington, D. C.

HARJO: They know that Indians can walk on grass without making a sound. We're not talking about just what little kids know or don't know. Grownup people think that Iroquois Indians, Mohawks and others, work on high steel and build the skyscrapers because they really like it way up high and can walk very carefully on those high beams. The money is good and the Indian people in the northeast are very poor and not very many non-Indians want those jobs. So Indians have gotten them.

And that's an economic fact. And over time have developed certain skills. So there are all sorts of myths that are around and many people accept them as the truth. One thing that is not a myth is that Indian people call the earth their mother and Indian people do not exist in isolation from our animals. We don't own the bears. The bears own us. We don't own the salmon. The salmon owns us. And because we have an ability to interfere we have a responsibility to not interfere, and to make certain that we live in harmony. These concepts, I think, are important for all people to begin to think about because we're not living in harmony with one another.

MERROW: Suzan Harjo of the Native American Rights Fund in Washington, D. C.

REINHARDT: The printed transcript of this four part series costs $4.00. The set of cassette recordings is also available, for $12.00.

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REINHARDT: The complete transcript, $4.00. The cassette recordings, $12.00.

MERROW: And ask for our list of past Options in Education programs when you write. That's free. And please, tell us the call letters of your own local NPR station.

REINHARDT: One favor you might do us, a lot of you have been writing with your ideas on what could be done to improve education and to improve this program.

MERROW: In a few weeks we're going to read some of your letters on the air and we'd like to hear from more of you.

REINHARDT: Same address, National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

MERROW: Options in Education is a co-production of National Public Radio and the Institute for Educational Leadership of the George Washington University. Support is provided by the National Institute of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REINHARDT: Options in Education is written and produced by John Merrow. Mary Rouse is our Associate Producer. Rebecca Goldfield is our Assistant Producer. Our engineers are Norb Gallery, Karen Blechman and Craig Laird.

MERROW: Some of the material for this program came from Lynette Albert, Station KEYA, Belcort, North Dakota; Bill Abbot, KUNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Lewis Foster, KMUW, Wichita, Kansas; and Alex van Oss in

Washington, D. C. I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

Program No. 240: "Indian Education, Part Three"

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INDIAN EDUCATION, PART THREE

YOUNG WOMAN WHO WANTS TO BE IMPORTANT SOME DAY

INTERVIEWER: What do you want to do when you graduate?

STUDENT: I want to go to college. I want to -- I don't exactly know what it's called, but I'd like to talk to people about their problems, and I'd like to help them. I'd like to be somebody they could turn to when they need somebody. I want to be an important person when I get out of college.

MERROW: That young American Indian wants something most other young people want, but she's likely to meet stumbling blocks along the way.

REINHARDT: First she has to finish college, and most Indians don't. Somewhere between 70 and 90 percent of Indians who start college drop out.

MERROW: She'll also have to decide, if she hasn't already, whether she wants to be successful among her own people, perhaps on a reservation, or if she wants to make it in the white mainstream world. I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt, for NPR's Options in Education, with a third in our series on Indian education.

MERROW: In this report, higher education.

REINHARDT: An estimated 40,000 Indians are now going to college, in prestigious private colleges, state universities, city colleges and even Indian controlled community colleges. That's at least 10 times the number who went 15 years ago.

MERROW: Whatever kind of college a young Indian chooses, the process seems to force a choice. Will the Indian graduate go back to the reservation to help his or her people or remain in the mainstream.

REINHARDT: If he goes back, how will the tribe accept him.

MERROW: Not all Indians believe there is a conflict. Michael Doris, a Modoc Indian who heads the Native American Studies Program at Dartmouth College.

DARTMOUTH'S INDIAN PROGRAM DIRECTOR SAYS INDIANS DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE

DORIS: The either/or part is what rankles me. I mean the idea that in order to be in the mainstream, to be successful, one cannot go back and interact and work on behalf of one's own community. I mean

that's just silly. Now, if a student graduates from here with certain talents and training, let us say that they intend to go to law school, and they go to, as is the case with one of our Native American graduates, a top law school, Harvard Law School, and they use their skills to further justice, and part of the justice that they seek to further has to do with Native American law. Now, there's no either/or there. They're working with and on behalf of their community and are in the mainstream. I would maintain that Native American communities are in the mainstream. I would maintain that Native American communities are in the mainstream. They may not be Madison Avenue's mainstream, but it's their mainstream, and that's what rankles me about that question, the assumption that there is a we-they and the real world and the traditional world, and I just don't see that dichotomy.

REINHARDT: Michael Doris of Dartmouth College's Native American Studies Program. He was interviewed for Options in Education by Marianne Blake, member station WVPR, Windsor, Vermont.

MERROW: Anita Poitra is Chippewa. She's about to go off to college and is determined not to come back to her reservation.

ANITA POITRA WANTS TO BE A DOCTOR, FOR HERSELF, NOT HER TRIBE

POITRA: I'm strong on this. I mean I'm -- I think there's places that you can get a lot of self-satisfaction rather than here.

ALBERT: What would you like to do and where would you like to go?

POITRA: Well, I've already been accepted. I'm going into medicine and I'm going to the University of Minnesota, University of North Dakota, UND, and Rochester Medical School. So -- and I hope to someday build a career in Rochester at the Mayo Clinic, hopefully.

ALBERT: A lot of people have been saying it's important for Indian students especially that become doctors, to come back to the reservation. How -- is that a question you've had to struggle with?

POITRA: I've seen the facilities at a reservation. A lot of students go into medicine because they feel that people need help. They'd rather help their own tribe, their own people. But I'm doing this for me, not for my people, unfortunately. I guess maybe I should be doing it for them, but I'm working more on the personal satisfaction level.

MERROW: Anita Poitra, a college bound Chippewa, interviewed for Options in Education by Lynette Albert, KEYA, Bellcort, North Dakota.

REINHARDT: She feels no conflict, but then she hasn't gone off

to college yet. Maybe when she gets there she'll find herself in the kind of situation Flo Wiger is describing.

FLO WIGER DESCRIBES PRESSURE INDIANS ARE UNDER

WIGER: We have a young woman now at Minnesota who's enrolled in the Dental Program, and if she makes it through, which I'm of the opinion now she probably is not going to -- if she would make it through she would be the first American Indian female dentist ever. And when we talk, the thing that comes up all the time is, "I can't think the way that they want me to think. I cannot assume the values that they want me to assume. And that in order for me to get through this program, I have to integrate that into my mechanism, and I can't do it."

MERROW: Flo Wiger is Director of the American Indian Reservation Center at the University of Minnesota. The problem she describes, adapting to the mainstream way of thinking and performing, is just one hurdle for an Indian in college.

REINHARDT: Once the Indian student has mastered the white mainstream academic ways and is graduated, he or she is likely to be pressured to come home again, to help other Indians, that is to put aside white thinking.

FLO WIGER SAYS MUCH OF THE PRESSURE IS FROM INDIANS THEMSELVES

WIGER: Students are taught that your purpose in being in an institution like that is to get your degree and then look at all these positions that are going to be waiting for you. And when the Indian staff is interacting with people in the colleges, the faculty members in the colleges, and we express the needs as we perceive them to be, you know, we need engineers, we need business people, we need physicians, we need nurses, so they can go back into the communities. The response that we get continuously is there's no reason for them to go back into your communities. There are all kinds of jobs just waiting out here, you know. If you could give me five Indian engineers, Flo, you know, they'd have their pick of 30, 40 jobs. And I say, "But those are jobs in your society, and we want those students to go back into our own society." The perception of the people in those institutions is that by doing that there is a disservice being placed for the student that we in fact are trying to continue, as this one person told me last week, "You want to segregate those kids." And I looked at him and I said, "You're right. That's exactly what I want to do." And see, you've got to understand, the mind set of the American public for years in this country now has been integration, integration, integration. Segregation was a bad word for so long, and now you've got this group of crazy Indians running around saying, "We want our own areas. We want our reservations. We want our communities. We want to run them. We want our own way of living, our own life style. We

want to cont[illegible] our own destiny."

MERROW: Flo Wiger, interviewed for Options in Education by Linda Wagner.

REINHARDT: Not all Indians want to go back to the reservation or to spend their careers helping the tribe.

MERROW: And there's another side to that as well. Not all Indians back home want the college educated ones to come back. A hostile reception may await the Indian with a degree, as if somehow that education has erased the graduate's Indian-ness.

REINHARDT: But the conflicts that education brings are not the major reason that most Indian college students drop out. The chief cause is poor academic preparation in elementary and secondary school.

INDIAN ADULT DESCRIBES POOR PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE

INDIAN ADULT: I grew up in a little town on the west side of Michigan, not really knowing, you know, just why I didn't fit into the system. And it was a struggle perhaps until I was, you know, in my 20s, before I finally realized that, you know, jeez, I wasn't really a dummy, and I wasn't really, you know, the incorrigible youth that I was branded by the educational system. And before I fully realized that perhaps they didn't meet their responsibilities to me as a student, and before I could really grasp onto that, because I had a sense at that time that what they taught was right, and you know, somehow they were educating the -- you know, the savages, and they were educating the Indian people, that we didn't know anything. You know, it's really an overwhelming feeling to find out that they were wrong and that we had something going for us that them as educators just couldn't understand and didn't want to understand.

REINHARDT: Another explanation for Indian failure in college, they miss tribal life.

RICHARD CHINO, A LAGUNA, SAYS RESERVATION LIFE IS SIMPLER AND BETTER

CHINO: Like when they kill a -- you know, like when they have a deer dinner or something, everybody's invited, not just one, not just the families, but everybody that's related, different clans, you know. And it's something that, you know, a lot of people look forward to is when they get their first deer, and it's really close. And I guess the closeness there is what, I guess, makes them feel lonely, out of place, out of reach from what they were brought up around.

MERROW: So it isn't necessarily that the non-Indian world is so hostile. It's just those close ties aren't there.

CHINO: Yeah. Because, you know, like they always tell us,

you know, when you go away, you know, "Come back and visit us. Don't be ashamed." You know, don't do this, don't do that. And right away you feel good about it, because there's -- you're still wanted.

REINHARDT: Richard Chino, a college educated Laguna who now works in a high school on his reservation.

MERROW: The group feeling Chino describes does not encourage the individual competitiveness you need for college. Some say Indian people lack that me first attitude they need to make it through.

REINHARDT: Michael Limas, Director of an institute for Native American development in Chicago.

MICHAEL LIMAS SAYS INDIANS CAN BE COMPETITIVE IN DOMINANT WORLD AND STILL REMAIN INDIAN

LIMAS: That's our number one problem, is working with them, working to maybe not necessarily change their attitudes, but to bring about an understanding that this is the way mainstream society is, that if you want to be relatively successful in it you have to look at competition and moving ahead as realistic. That's the way to get ahead.

DOUGHERTY: Isn't that contradicting the basic focus of your -- the second part of your classes, which is on the one hand you're teaching people how to get ahead in mainstream America. On the other hand you're saying respect Indian values.

LIMAS: Well, I think you can have respect for the values. You can raise people's consciousness levels about themselves and at the same time begin to teach them those techniques, those strategies which are going to bring them to a point of successfulness in mainstream society. I think we can bring those two together into this type of institute and people coming through will be touched by both.

REINHARDT: Michael Limas, Director of a new program for Indian students at Truman College in Chicago. He was interviewed for Options in Education by Jill Dougherty.

MERROW: His program hopes to teach tribal values and mainstream competitiveness. Most of the students are urban Indians from the immediate Chicago area.

REINHARDT: Today there's a new kind of college. Several thousand Indians are choosing to attend Indian controlled community colleges, located either on reservations or in largely Indian communities.

CLASS IN NAVAJO LANGUAGE

TEACHER: (Speaking Navajo) Okay. (Speaking Navajo)

MERROW: Navajo Community College in Sale, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation, is one of 17 Indian controlled community colleges.

REINHARDT: Every student at Navajo Community College has to take courses in Navajo history, culture and language.

TEACHER: All right, can you tell me the first two vowels? Are they long, short?

STUDENT: Long.

TEACHER: Uh-huh. (Speaking Navajo) Okay? (Speaking Navajo)

MERROW: Do most of these students actually know this, know some of this from home?

TEACHER: All of the students in here are fluent in Navajo, but they are just now learning to read and write.

MERROW: So they speak it. This is the next step.

TEACHER: Right, uh-huh. (Speaking Navajo) Okay, how do you spell it?

REINHARDT: Besides nine required hours in Navajo and Indian studies, students also have to take basics like math.

MORE CLASSES, MATH AND ENGLISH, AT NAVAJO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TEACHER: And get percent, okay? So if you've got a value like 7-1/2 percent, okay, and I want to convert that into a decimal, the first thing I do is take this fraction and make that into a decimal.

MERROW: This is one of the math labs, although it's a little bit different, it's a little bit more relaxed. There's one corner with easy chairs where students can study, and there are some carrills, and there are some tables where groups are studying, and I think you're saying that about 75 percent of the students who come here from high school actually are not prepared for college level math, so they really need labs, they need extra work.

TEACHER: That's exactly right, and I arrive at that figure by -- we do a math placement testing of every new student that enters this institution, and from that I can say that approximately 75 percent of the students that I at least have been involved in testing, test into below what is considered college level mathematics, which is college algebra and trigonometry.

MERROW: So these students are really taking what, 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade math?

TEACHER: Actually, the course starts at what probably would be considered 4th grade math and works them completely up through, which would be 9th grade, which is the first year of algebra in most high schools.

MERROW: If you didn't test the students ahead of time, you might come in and start teaching college level math, find out they don't do very well, and you might assume, well, either that you're not teaching very well or that your students are stupid. You're saying neither of those is correct.

TEACHER: That's right. What we have found is that when this happens and we lose the student, that we have actually failed because what we didn't do was actually assess where those particular students entered into NCC. We didn't know where their math level was. By doing placement testing we can tell where their math level is and start them where they should be started.

MERROW: And the students are not stupid.

TEACHER: The students aren't stupid, no.

MERROW: And you admit to teaching well.

TEACHER: Of course.

TEACHER: But that becomes a problem in identifying who am I. Who am I? Who are you? How would you answer the question who am I? Why don't you take a moment and just write a short paragraph in which you answer the question, who am I? Okay, it's on the board.

STUDENT: About yourself?

TEACHER: Yes. Not me, you.

MERROW: This is first year English communications skills?

TEACHER: Right. This is Freshman English 111, and we deal with essays.

MERROW: So you're working on their writing. You're working on their analytical skills.

TEACHER: Right. Very much on analytical skills. In fact that's the key. We take a holistic approach. We try to let teaching of, you know, the mechanics, which often are identified as the mechanics, grow out of the whole essay. You know, it's a holistic approach, as opposed to isolating nouns or pronouns, or --

MERROW: Is it important to you that the pronouns are in agreement or that the sentence structure is perfect?

TEACHER: No. What's important to me is that the student

communicates.

MERROW: But can a student finish this course, pass this course and still say, "I are hungry," or some other basic error like that?

TEACHER: Yes, it's possible. It's possible. It's not acceptable, but it's possible. And we have to distinguish between errors and dialect, you know, what is consistent in a particular form of speaking.

MERROW: Are you going to tell that student that o.c 'n the real world when he or she comes up for a job interview and it's going to make it harder to get a job if you say, "I are hungry?"

TEACHER: Right, I will. I do all the time. Right. Yeah, that's an important distinction, though, that the choice is the student's. In other words we're providing the materials, we're providing the choices. Because it's very important that the language of the students is respected.

REINHARDT: Navajo Community College has 1,900 students, nearly all part time. Tuition is $20.00 per credit hour, and nearly every student gets financial aid.

MERROW: As with other tribally controlled community colleges, NCC is to be an integral part of tribal economic and social development. One of its main purposes is to train workers for jobs available on the reservation.

REINHARDT: Its curriculum is vocationally oriented. NCC has only four courses in physics, twenty-four in home economics, three in anthropology, fourteen in animal science.

ANIMAL SCIENCE CLASS AT NCC

TEACHER: No, it's something that happens to the red cells, okay, and it looks like this. What's that called? Yeah, a rouleau. It's called a rouleau. And that's why horse blood cells out so fast is because of the rouleau formation and also that's why it's hard to make a stain or a smear from the horse blood.

MERROW: Let me interrupt one second. Tell me what class this is.

TEACHER: This is clinical pathology laboratory.

MERROW: And what are you doing right now?

TEACHER: Okay, we're doing one of the most important, probably one of the most important things that a technician does in a practice, and that's differential white blood cell counts, and these really give

a good picture lots of times of what's going on in the animal. It's almost essential in a diagnosis. It's a really simple procedure, as you can see. All you need is some blood, a couple of slides and a stain, and well, a microscope also.

MERROW: Where did you get the blood?

TEACHER: From the horse downstairs.

MERROW: And it's your hope, or at least the hope of Navajo Community College, that these students will go back and work on the reservation?

TEACHER: In some capacity, yeah.

MERROW: Perhaps as paravets, but maybe some will go on to become full fledged vets?

TEACHER: Right. Some of the students right here are planning to go to the University of Arizona and Colorado State next year, to continue their education.

REINHARDT: Yvonne Tso is one of the students in that program. Her goal is to be a veterinarian on the reservation.

YVONNE TSO, A NAVAJO WHO WANTS TO BE A VETERINARIAN

TSO: I've seen animals, you know, that needed help, and which I couldn't do anything about, and it happened with my horses and some animals and some cattle, that if I knew or took training maybe I could have helped them at that time. And also to help just the Navajo people to understand more, you know, about how to breed and what to do on certain occasions like that.

MERROW: I saw that one sheep out there that's dying of starvation.

TSO: Oh, yeah. That's right now, I guess, because of the rain and all this. We're not. Some of them don't understand to just let their cattle go out and they'll feed themselves, which they need to understand, that they also need help, you know, getting them some hay or other supplements like that.

MERROW: What's motivating you to do this?

TSO: Because a lot of my relatives, you know, their cattle's been dying and all this, you know, and they couldn't understand why. They tried to ask my parents why, and they didn't know why, so I finally made up my mind.

REINHARDT: Yvonne Tso, a Navajo who hopes to be a veterinarian some day. Right now she's a student at Navajo Community College, one of 17 Indian controlled community colleges.

MERROW: NCC has an annual budget of $6.4 million, nearly all of it from the federal government. Right now NCC is asking for more money, while the government wants to cut the budget.

REINHARDT: The government says NCC isn't serving enough students, only 1,900, mostly part time.

MERROW: NCC says in response that it needs a budget increase to reach more Indians who are widely scattered on the reservation.

REINHARDT: The college catalogue lists 60 faculty members and 50 administrators. We asked NCC President Dean Jackson about that ratio.

NCC PRESIDENT DEAN JACKSON

JACKSON: Where are those administrators, 50? Who are you talking about?

MERROW: They're listed in your catalogue.

JACKSON: The administrators over here is myself, the Dean of Instruction, Dean of Student Personnel and others. We figure there's only about 15 or 16.

MERROW: The catalogue lists 50.

JACKSON: The catalogue was written several years ago, and it's been updated, but a lot of those people identified in there are no longer here.

MERROW: You mean in a catalogue that's one year old you say most of those administrative positions are no longer -- no longer exist?

JACKSON: My interpretation of administrator is the people that are mostly up here in the Dean of Instruction area, Dean of Student Personnel, and their workers and the Vice-Presidents and myself. So the other people are down there working with the people, not necessarily as administrators. They might be listed.

REINHARDT: Dean Jackson, President of Navajo Community College.

MERROW: Many of NCC's 1,900 students are continuing education students, adults who come to college when they're not working. Sometimes the course work is catchup, as in this bilingual class leading

to a high school equivalency diploma.

AN ADULT EDUCATION CLASS AT NCC

TEACHER: (Speaking bilingually, in Navajo and English). Floyd is -- what kind of part of speech is Floyd?

STUDENT: A noun.

TEACHER: It's a noun, yeah. Okay -- opposite of he runs home -- It's a pronoun. Let's turn the page over. The bottom page, he says --

REINHARDT: Besides basic courses for high school equivalency students, NCC provides continuing in-service education, like this one day seminar for school vocational counselors.

A CLASS FOR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS

FILM VOICE: -- and the prospects of a person interested in teaching are not nearly as good.

TEACHER: Also, it's going to be real different for somebody who is a female and who is Indian and wants to be a teacher, than somebody that's a white male, for instance. There's going to be more opportunities, obviously, for that Indian than there is for the white male. So all of these things need to be taken into consideration because they're realities. Okay.

FILM VOICE: Goals. A person must identify the alternatives that are available to him. To do this he needs information.

REINHARDT: A one day seminar for school vocational counselors, given at Navajo Community College.

MERROW: Another use of the campus, Navajo culture for adults, also a one day seminar.

TEACHER: The Navajo lady, she is prepared, she is ready. She is getting up at dawn in the morning, and go walk outside, face the east and say -- state her preference whether she wants a boy or girl, and based on this her daily activity is based on that choice of hers. When she meets the plants, greet those plants of her choice, if she wants a boy, meet those plants that are boy plants, and talk to them and establish your communication, because this helps her development and understanding, which is not yet born, the one she wants to behold. Also, some of the things --

REINHARDT: A one day seminar on Navajo Child Development at Navajo Community College at Sale, Arizona. That college is part of a federal and Indian effort to give control of education to local

Indians.

MERROW: We're a little worried that federal policy may not be organized enough to accomplish much.

REINHARDT: Indian education programs and dollars are controlled by at least three federal agencies, and none of these agencies has an accurate count of the number of school age Indians.

MERROW: We're told that there are between 300 and 400,000, quite a range.

REINHARDT: How many Indians in college? One source says 22,000; another says 40,000.

MERROW: What percentage of Indians drop out of college? One estimate is 70 percent. Another authority says 90 percent. And the high school dropout rate is supposed to be between 20 percent and 35 percent.

REINHARDT: We've been told that we shouldn't generalize about Indians, because there are over 200 federally recognized tribes, all different.

MERROW: Maybe we can't generalize, but we ought to be able to get some accurate numbers. After all, the federal government spends over $500 million a year on Indian education, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Office of Education and the Department of Labor.

REINHARDT: How can the federal government know if it's meeting the needs if it doesn't know how many people have the needs?

TEACHER: (Speaking in Navajo). Nasal, huh? That's right.

REINHARDT: This is the third in our series on Indian education. Next, urban Indians. If you'd like the printed transcript of all four parts, send us $4.00.

MERROW: The cassette recordings are also available for $12.00 Write to us at National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

REINHARDT: The printed transcript, $4.00. The cassette recordings, $12.00.

MERROW: Our address again, National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D, C. 20036.

REINHARDT: Ask for our list of past Options in Education programs too, when you write. That's free.

MERROW: Options in Education is a co-production of National Public Radio and the Institute for Educational Leadership of the George Washington University. Support for the series is provided by the National Institute of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REINHARDT: Options in Education is written and produced by John Merrow. Mary Rouse is our Associate Producer. Rebecca Goldfield is our Assistant Producer. Our engineers are Andy Rosenberg and John Ewell.

MERROW: Some of the material for this program came from Marianne Blake, member station WVPR, Windsor, Vermont; Lynette Albert, KEYA, Bellcort, North Dakota; Lisa Schlein in Los Angeles, and Linda Wagner and Jill Dougherty in Chicago.

TEACHER: (Speaking in Navajo)

MERROW: I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

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"INDIAN EDUCATION, PART FOUR"

A MOTHER TELLS HOW HER CHILD WAS BRANDED A "HORSE THIEF" INDIAN

MOTHER: I remember out of the clear blue sky she was really upset about something, and in fact when she got home she just put her books on the table and come bouncing right out into the kitchen where I was fixing dinner, and she asked me a question, she said, "Ma, can I ask you a question?" And I said, "Sure, what?" She said, "Are we horse thieves?" And I done a double take and I looked back and I said, "Say that again, run it back." You know, I didn't think I was hearing right. So she brought that out, and I says, "Well, my gosh, no. Where did you ever get that idea or that conclusion?" She said, "Well, all the kids in our school," she said, "we're learning about Indians." And I asked her, "Well, what are you reading in the chapter about Indians?" She said, "That's it." They were talking about one story and something, Indians making a raid and everything, and killing the family, burning the home and stealing the horses. And then she says, "After I got out of school," she said, "then the kids started calling me horse thief."

MERROW: The mother says she went to see the teacher, who refused to let her examine the textbook or even talk about it. I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt, for NPR's Options in Education, with the fourth in our series on Indian education.

MERROW: In this report the special problems of urban Indians, including cowboy and Indian stereotypes, insensitive teachers and isolation from tribal culture.

SONG - BUFFY ST. MARIE

ST. MARIE: (Singing) Now that the long houses breed superstition, you force us to send our toddlers away to your schools where they're taught to despise their traditions --

REINHARDT: The school problems Indians seem to have everywhere are intensified in the cities, and over half of the 300 to 400,000 school age Indians live in urban areas.

MERROW: One difficulty arises because the dominant white culture labels some behavior bad, but it's exactly the behavior the Indian home life is encouraging.

REINHARDT: The influx of Indians into cities is a fairly recent phenomenon. It began on a large scale in the 1950s. That means that today's urban Indian school children are the first generation to face the conflict between an Indian home life based on one set of values and

a school life based on another.

URBAN LIFE IS NEW TO INDIANS, BILL MEMBERTO SAYS

MEMBERTO: You know, they're taught certain things at home. One of the things is to be independent and to -- you know, to develop your own role in life, and we support that amongst our children. Then when they get in the school situations they're cut off from really being independent and trying new things by the teachers and by the system, and I think that creates very much a conflict in a young child of, you know, where am I right and where am I wrong, and unfortunately, because a lot of us never find out where that right or where that wrong is, you know, we drop out of the education system. And I think that has a lot to do with the large amount of dropout rate that we have amongst Indian people, you know, from the educational systems as they exist now.

GROPSORIAN: There are children who are raised on reservations, and then there are children -- and then they come to the cities and the urban areas, and then there are children who are Indian who are raised in urban areas right from the beginning. Do they have different problems when they get into school?

MEMBERTO: Yes, I'm sure that they do, and I've observed some myself. Part of the problem is, of course, when the urban Indian is -- again, you know, he's kind of acclimated to the pressures of a school situation and acclimated to the very competitive nature that many of our schools get into, and in a reservation person coming in to, say, the 9th grade, he comes in and they look at him perhaps as not being, you know, wondering about his educational and intellectual skills, because he doesn't join in the -- you know, the competitiveness of the school system, and the competitiveness of the classroom. And they don't -- the teachers in the school system, and the administrators, don't seem to understand that he's come out of a different type of setting altogether, and they look at those as a negative point and don't really do any research into, you know, understanding why he's in that mind set and why he operates that way. So for instance we get, in some cases, reservation people, Indians coming into a school system where it's very competitive and you get things like direct eye contact, and kind of the confrontive nature of a teacher to answer that question. Well, you know, he would be feeling very taken aback by that, because in some of the settings, a lot of the reservation settings, we don't deal with our children in a competitive sense, and we don't do it in a confronting sense that they seem to take in the public school systems. And that certainly has a bearing on how that child produces their hour. And what happens, I think, of course, is that the kid will stand as much as he can, and then just stop participating and stop going to the school.

REINHARDT: Bill Memberto, an Indian living in Detroit, interviewed

for Options in Education by Michael Grofsorian.

MERROW: The Indian who moves into a city often leaves his tribal support system behind. There may be another 5,000 Indians in the same city, but they'll be widely scattered.

REINHARDT: And more important, they will be from many different tribes, with different values and traditions. The dominant culture may lump Indians together, but in fact there are more than 300 different tribes.

MERROW: That makes survival tougher.

JULIE ZIEGLER SAYS WHITES LUMP INDIANS TOGETHER, EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE 300 DIFFERENT TRIBES

ZIEGLER: We all have our own cultures, our own traditions, you know, so you just can't, you know, say like, "Well, all of you Indian people here in Chicago just don't have it together because you're not, you know, you don't have an Indian group or whatever, you know." You can't do that, because there are so many of us, and we all believe in our own ways, just like the French do and just like the Irish do, and so on and so forth, German, whatever. Another problem they face in here is spirituality. There's such a -- so many religions that have -- that the Indian people have assimilated into that tradition, or spiritualism, which was in our -- we were actually born into because it's in the family, you know, have been kind of lost with some of the Indian people, and it's hard to get people together in a group when they all have such diverse interests and ways, no matter if we all are Indian. If you want to be a traditional Indian and if you want to keep your spiritualism, then the city is the worst place to come, they tell me, because there's so many things to keep you from that. But I don't think so. I think you can keep your Indian spirituality and white education too, because for your spirituality, spirituality gives you strength, inner strength, and to cope in this white society that's you damned sure need.

MERROW: Julie Ziegler, a Sioux who goes to Truman College in Chicago. She was interviewed for Options in Education by Jill Dougherty.

REINHARDT: Without tribal support and a spiritual sense of one's own Indian-ness, many Indians simply don't make it in city schools. Their dropout rate is as high as 95 percent in some areas.

MERROW: From the stories Indian students are telling us, dropping out may make sense.

INDIANS IN CITIES HAVE HIGH DROPOUT RATES. A STORY TELLS WHY.

STUDENT: The first day I walked in his class he just, you know,

looked at me and I heard him mumble to himself, "It's another -- she's Indian, too." And so he just turned around and I sat down, you know, and I was just talking to a couple of people I met at school, and everybody was talking in class. He said, "Shut up and sit down." So I just looked at him, you know, and I stayed quiet and I sat down. He said, "You've got a detention." I said, "Why?" He said, "For talking." I said, "Everybody else was talking." He said, "I don't care, you have a detention and you'd better come." So that night I went, you know, and he just sat there and he just stared at me, you know, like he was just looking right through me, you know, and it really bugged me. And then later on during the semester, we had a personality clash, and I'd go in there and he'd provoke me to argue with him, you know. I'd be talking and he'd tell me to shut up, so I'd shut up. And then one time I really got made at him, "Hey, you respect me and I'm going to respect you." He said, "No, I don't have to respect you if I don't want to respect you. I'll tell you to do whatever I want and you'd better do it." I said, "No, I don't have to do it." And so I got mad and I just started yelling at him in Indian, so he started just -- you know, "I'm going to write you a pass. Go see the principal." So I went down to the principal, and the principal's there, "What did you say to him?" "I don't have to tell you. If you don't know, well you just don't know." And before that I kept -- you know, I went to my counselor and the principal and asked them if they could change my class because I wasn't getting along, and they're, "No, no, you have to stay in there. There's no way we can change your class no matter what." And so I just flunked that class, and the only way I could get out of it was to get suspended from that class.

GROFSORIAN: So all these problems must be dampening your spirit a bit.

STUDENT: Yeah, I just don't really feel like going back to that school. I just -- you know, because without that 1-1/2 credit I have I can't get into the 10th grade next year. If I can't get into the 10th grade I'm just, you know, going to say I quit, that's it.

GROFSORIAN: You'd have to go back to the 9th grade for the third time, then.

STUDENT: Yeah.

MERROW: A 9th grader in Detroit. In math she tests at a 10th grade level. In English, at an 11th grade level. Yet she says she was put into a class for slow learners because she started school two weeks late. She had to take her complaint to the school superintendent to get into the right classes. She spoke with Michael Grofsorian.

REINHARDT: Sometimes the problems are more flagrant.

PREJUDICE MAY LEAD TO VIOLENCE, SAYS MONA STONEFISH

STONEFISH: Oh, a teacher was shaking my boy up. And I teach my boys, you know, like don't fight your teachers back, you know, you have to go to school, because like I'm not a teacher and I can't teach you these things. So when you go to school, you know, listen, even if somebody like does something to you that you don't like, don't answer them back. Just come home and tell me. So this teacher threw my boy up against the locker, so he ran away from school. Nobody called me to tell me, well, your son ran away from school, we don't know where he's at, or you know, the school's supposed to be responsible for him. Well, he had been gone away from the school for a good hour. By then, you know, I was mad myself, so I took a pause for a half hour myself, you know, maybe swearing a little bit, you know, and just getting really made, you know, what I'm going to do to them when I get there, all in my head. So when I went back to the school they still didn't -- the teacher still hadn't reported it to the office that he was missing. But when I got there they called the police, you know, and they felt that Cam should have a -- you know, be seen by a psychiatrist or, you know, be given a school record for being -- you know, for taking off from the school like that. And I was lucky. I know this woman named Esther Mays, you know, who was able to assist me on that, and well, you know, at that time I was really angry, and you don't talk to a parent, you know, when they're angry like that, because you know, like, I like to be a lady too, you know, but I'll fight. So that's what I did. So I was pregnant with my daughter at the time, and they called the police on me. They were going to arrest me. But the police wouldn't arrest me. So they turned around and they called me and they apologized, you know, because after I had explained to the police the whole thing and Mrs. Mays had told them, you know, what the circumstances were, because I called people I knew before I went to the school. I told them, you know, what had happened, what I was going to do. They advised me not to do it, so I said okay, but I went to school anyway. And what they blamed it on was because I was pregnant, you know. They started saying, "Oh, well, I know you lost your temper because you are pregnant." I said, "No, that's not why I lost my temper, because my boy has got a knot on the back of his head and he ran home with no coat on and it's wintertime --," it was February, and I said, "He could have gotten hit by a car. He was, you know, hysterical." And I couldn't get up to open the door fast enough, and he started running somewhere else. I didn't know where he was going. We didn't have no Indians, you know, that we knew on our block. I don't know, maybe he would have ran -- I don't know where he would have ran. But I had to run outside with no shoes on, you know, to call him back. But that was just one of the problems, and they never solved it. You know, like what they tried to do was blame it -- you know, like on me, and here something had happened in the school, but you know, like they've got -- you know they know how to do all that fancy talk, you

know, they went to school. They know how to overtalk you -- what do you call it, paraphrasing? So that's what they did, and in the meantime they had left the whole issue, and the issue came back on me, you know. They never mentioned once why he wasn't -- why he ran out of the school, until this Esther -- you know, Esther Mays came to the school, and then the problem was resolved.

MERROW: Urban Indians face still another problem, tough, crowded, often violent neighborhoods. Lewis Delgado, an Oneida.

LEWIS DELGADO SAYS THAT INDIANS HAVE ALL THE OTHER "CITY" PROBLEMS, LIKE VIOLENCE, POVERTY, ET CETERA

DELGADO: We have a different kind of situation in that our kids not only are dealing with, you know, their own identity in terms of their own understanding of what Indian is, and also their basic skills and so on, but they also have to deal with the streets of Chicago, and uptown community, which is high crime, high poverty, high everything around here, and so we are also dealing with those on a daily basis. All the fires you see on TV, the tragic fires where all these people died, was on the next block. You know, our families were involved with those tragedies, and our kids had to deal with those kind of problems on a regular basis. So, beyond their Indian-ness and beyond understanding where they are today, as well as being Indian, they have to understand, you know, why these things are happening, what's going on, you know, in the neighborhood. And it's difficult, because in terms of their education process, Indian kids don't see Indian people at all levels of government. They don't have an Indian Mayor. They'll never see one in Chicago, most likely. You know, they don't see Indian postmen, they don't see Indian policemen, they don't see Indian firemen, and on and on and on. So we have to say, you know, those things are available to you but we have to help them find the means for attaining that kind of position.

REINHARDT: Lewis Delgado, an Oneida who is coordinator of the Owiowa School in Chicago. He spoke with Linda Wagner.

MERROW: That school started in 1973, one year after the federal government passed the Indian Education Act of 1972. Title IV of that Act recognizes the problems Indians face in public schools and provides money for any public school with more than 10 Indians.

REINHARDT: Federally funded Title IV programs require parental involvement. Indian parents are supposed to work with the school to create programs and decide on curriculum. Bill Memberto says it doesn't always work that way.

FEDERAL TITLE FOR PROGRAMS DO'. ; ALWAYS WORK. BILL MEMBERTO OF DETROIT

MEMBERTO: What we see happening in some cases is that literally

the administration runs the program, and they use the -- literally use the parent committee as a nonentity and don't really let them control the program.

GROFSORIAN: What recourse do the parents have to resist that control?

MEMBERTO: They have to be assertive. They have to be -- maybe assertive is not strong enough, but they have to be aggressive about what their rights are under Title IV, and emphasize those rights to the administrators and the school district, and emphasize the fact the Indian people and parent committees have a big say on how those programs are operated. In actuality I think it's a dominancy, that they're the people who should control those programs, and not the administrators from the school system. The administrators of course being more knowledgeable about the bureaucratic system, are able to a lot of times bluff their way through things. Or I've had administrators who, quite frankly, have said that it'll be operated the way the school wants it or it won't be operated, that they won't accept the grant. And the bottom line gets to be is that, you know, how much can we protest without really losing everything we have.

REINHARDT: Bill Memberto, Director of the Detroit Indian Center.

MERROW: Title IV funds can be used to support pre-schools. The program might end up being controlled by Indians, but somewhere along the line someone from the dominant white culture will come to evaluate.

LINDA ARANAYDO, A DAY CARE TEACHER, ABOUT WHITE EVALUATORS

ARANAYDO: A man came to evaluate the pre-school, and he was in my classroom, and he was from a university. He was from San Francisco State. And he said that he thought it was too quiet in the classroom, and he thought that the adults at that time were spending more time attending to each other than to the kids, and he said that he thought there should be more structure. When I called them to group time and said, "It's time for us to sit down for stories," he thought there should be more structure. He suggested I ring a bell and they come and sit down. All the things that he cited as things that were wrong were things that we thought were right. For one thing, we don't want the kids to just blab away if there's nothing to talk about. So there's been a lot of you talk if you need to talk, but that day was a real quiet, peaceful day, and we had a silversmith come in who was demonstrating making rings, and so the parents were really watching him carefully, and the kids, there was one person outside, and the kids could sit and watch if they wanted to, or they could go out and play. If they came inside, they had to be still and watch. If they didn't want to be still, then they had to go outside. And I think what we were teaching them there was respect for this man's craft, and also

the way that you behave when you're around adults and someone that you respect. So he didn't like that, but we all decided that we liked that, and we liked how the kids were. And we also decided that we liked the amount of freedom that they had, and we didn't want them coming when a bell rang.

MERROW: Linda Aranaydo, a Creek who teaches at Hintil Children's Center in Oakland, California. She was interviewed for Options in Education by Ken Tiger.

REINHARDT: In some cities there are survival schools, set up to offset what Indians see as the damage public school does. Bill Wahpeepah of the Indian Survival School, in Oakland.

BILL WAHPEEPAH OF OAKLAND'S SURVIVAL SCHOOL

WAHPEEPAH: We survive spiritually, using a sacred pipe, using the sacred swetlach. We use these things, these ways of playing that our grandfathers have used, to support us spiritually. And then we have classes here, on political education, on the history of the people. And on survival.

FREIBURGER: What originally gave you the idea to form a separate school for Indians in Oakland?

WAHPEEPAH: The dropout rate and the -- see, I volunteered my time a long time ago with one of the elementary schools, and as I looked at the curriculum base in the public school systems, there was nothing there complementing our people. Our people were -- our students were studying white heroes, or black heroes, or Chicano heroes. There was no in-depth study of Crazy Horse or Black Hawk or Chief Joseph, nothing that the kids could identify with, nothing that could tell them who they are and why they are. It all complemented the United States history, and nothing spoke of the history of the land and the importance that our people have in the responsibility to the earth here.

FREIBURGER: But this is not presently a substitute for the public school?

WAHPEEPAH: No, it isn't. It's our way of sustaining ourselves and maintaining ourselves as people. It's an oasis for a lot of young people and a lot of AIM people throughout the country. We've had medicine people here from all over the country. We've had medicine people here from Canada. We've had medicine people here from Oklahoma, from South Dakota and from the southwest. We've had visitors from Portugal, from Spain, from France, from West Germany, from Japan, from Korea. We've had people from all over the world in this house, and from all over the Indian nations, to visit here, to visit with us, because they -- internationally they seem to understand that the red

people of the Western Hemisphere have something to contribute to the balance of the residents on this planet.

FREIBURGER: Do you think that Americans have ignored that contribution?

WAHPEEPAH: Yes. I think Americans are arrogant, you know, in their arrogance and their elitist and their racist attitudes. They're really ignoring what contributions we have to make. They're ignoring the contributions that their children have to make. They're ignoring their responsibilites of their religion and the spirituality that goes along with being a nation or country.

FREIBURGER: Do you find that young people learn better here than they do in the public schools?

WAHPEEPAH: I'm not trying to do a comparison.

FREIBURGER: Uh-huh.

WAHPEEPAH: See, I'm not trying to compete with the public schools. I'm just saying that the public school isn't doing their number, and there's a few of us who want to do it this way, so we're doing it this way. A comparative study, it would be unfair, because if we have to do an evaluation, then we're going to have to use an evaluation technique that we learned in a public school system or a university system.

FREIBURGER: What are the needs of American Indians today?

WAHPEEPAH: They need to read. They need to write. They need to know who they are. They must understand that they are the truth in this land. It's us that has to grasp the rungs of freedom. It's us that has to take care of ourselves. There's not going to be an Emancipation Proclamation for us. It's us that has to free ourselves. And yes, more and more people are doing that. More and more people are being made to understand that. It's happening here, it's happening in Pine Ridge, it's happening in Navajo, it's happening in six nations. It's happening clear across the country, in Canada and in Alaska and in Mexico and Guatemala and particularly in Nicaragua. We've just seen a purification of a country. Yes, we see, we see that.

FREIBURGER: Have your ideas for the school changed a lot over the years?

WAHPEEPAH: Yeah. We thought we could sit down in some instances like a traditional classroom setting and let it happen that way, and it can't happen that way. Because then it presents the same kind of a situation that exists in a public school, a parochial school setting, or a federal boarding school, where you have a chalkboard behind you and you have an authoritarian figure in front, and then you have

everybody lined up in rows or in a circle around you, or you know, tables around you. We found that that didn't work as well, that the informal way of meeting and talking and caring for one another and educating one another is a lot more effective.

REINHARDT: Bill Wahpeepah, Director of Oakland's Indian Survival School, talking with Paul Freiburger.

MERROW: Survival schools may be one way to improve schooling for urban Indians. Better Title IV programs will also help.

REINHARDT: Indian people we've talked with want schools to hire more Indian teachers and develop ways of sensitizing the non-Indians now teaching.

MERROW: Some Indians argue for going back to the reservation, to a life separate from non-Indians. Others argue for economic development, to get Indians out of poverty.

REINHARDT: But these are long term solutions. Shirley Northbird says the first priority is equipping the children to cope with the school as it often is for them today.

SHIRLEY NORTHBIRD SAYS CHILDREN MUST BE TAUGHT TO SURVIVE

NORTHBIRD: Some of them you sympathize with and some that you know are strong enough, you tell them, "Yeah, you're going to have to deal with it," and try to help them, give them ways that they can deal with it. You know, and that learning to deal with people at this age is going to save you problems later in life, you know, because if you allow yourself to become embittered by that individual, then you become like that individual. If they're going to survive and succeed in whatever manner, and at whatever level, they've got to learn to deal with it. I always tell them, you know, "Yeah, you're probably going to have to go into that class," or, "You're probably going to have to deal with this person in some way, at some time. But you don't have to do it every day. Or maybe you're going to have to do it for 10 weeks, or maybe you're going to have to do it for the next two weeks. And then you're out, you know, so just go in there and get it over with and try to -- try not to, you know, to come to locking horns with that individual. Do what's required of you and get out of there, because you can't change that person. And if you lock --," you know, if they get locked into a situation with this teacher, there's a strong possibility that they're going to come out of there feeling towards non-Indians the way that person feels towards them as an Indian, you know, and somewhere along the line we've got to each our kids that they're the ones that have got to turn this all around. And we can have all the coordinators in the world, you could have a school that has all Indian staff and it's still going to be the students that are going to have to go out

there and be the ones that do it. For themselves and for the other Indian kids.

MERROW: Shirley Northbird, a Chippewa who coordinates the Indian Education Committee in Cass Lake, Minnesota, interviewed by Terry O'Brien, member station KAXE, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

SONG - BUFFY ST. MARIE

ST. MARIE: (Singing) Can you remember the times that you have held your head high and told all your friends of your Indian claim, proud good lady and proud good man? Your great-great-grandfather from Indian blood sprang, and you feel in your heart for these ones.

REINHARDT: The complete transcript of this four part series on Indians in school is available for $4.00.

MERROW: The cassette recordings are also available for $12.00.

REINHARDT: Our address, National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

MERROW: The transcript of all four parts, $4.00. The cassette recordings, $12.00.

REINHARDT: We also have a list of past Options in Education programs that are available in transcript and cassetted. That's free.

MERROW: One more thing. We're interested in what you would do to improve the way all of us learn. We hope you'll send us your ideas.

REINHARDT: In a few weeks we're going to read your letters on the air, so please take a minute and write us at National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

MERROW: Options in Education is a co-production of National Public Radio and the Institute for Educational Leadership of the George Washington University. Support is provided by the National Institute of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REINHARDT: Options in Education is written and produced by John Merrow. Mary Rouse is our Associate Producer. Rebecca Goldfield is our Assistant Producer. Our engineers are Dave Glasser, Andy Rosenberg and Mary Ishnaga.

MERROW: Material for this program came from Michael Grofsorian in Detroit; Paul Freiburger and Ken Tiger in Oakland, California; Linda Wagner and Jill Dougherty in Chicago; and Terry O'Brien of member station KAXE, Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Special thanks to Peggy Berryhill for her help in this series.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.